

## The Future of our National Anglican Church

Towards the end of last year I wrote the article below about Motion 29. Our one-day Synod is looming and it's essential that our Synod reps know your thoughts.

Some of our home groups may be discussing this. There will be two meetings for those who are not in home groups or whose groups are not discussing together. These will be held in the church **this week** on:

- **Wednesday 7 February at 7.00pm**
- **Friday 9 February at 10.00am**

The plan is to show some of the material available and then those who wish to discuss the Motion will be welcome to stay and do so. Those who wish to go away and process the information privately or with others can do so. There will be a very simple handout so we can gain your opinion and an on-line survey – it will only be one question with room for comment if you wish to do so.

***I cannot stress the importance of this motion enough. It may well determine whether or not the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand stays together or not.***

Here is what I wrote earlier:

The Anglican Communion, our province (Aotearoa and Pacifica) and our Nelson Diocese has been discussing and praying about the issue of homosexuality for some years now. More specifically we have discussed gay marriage, same sex relationship blessings and the ordination of practicing gay people. There has been a lot of talk and no decisions have been made.

One very great concern in the midst of all this is that of church unity. No-one wants to leave, or be pushed out, of the Anglican family. No one. On Saturday 10 March 2018 our Diocese will have a one day Special Synod. The sole purpose of that meeting is to discuss Motion 29.

Motion 29 will be discussed at General Synod held in New Plymouth from 3 May - 10 May 2018. Our Diocesan General Synod representatives will present the views of our Diocese. It has been formulated by a group chosen by General Synod. That group has included our Bishop Richard.

Our Parish Synod representatives will represent your views at the Diocesan One Day Synod in

March. That means we need to know what you think about Motion 29.

At this point most of you will not even have heard of it.

Simply put, Motion 29 is a pragmatic suggestion, to our national church, of a way to deal with the blessing of same-sex relationships. The suggestion aims to hold together our national church in the midst of widely-differing viewpoints.

Motion 29 suggests that clergy be allowed to bless same sex relationships in dioceses where their bishop gives permission. No one will be forced to conduct same sex blessings if they believe it is wrong. No one will be permitted to carry out same sex marriages.

Same sex marriage is not addressed in this motion. Neither is the ordination of practicing homosexuals.

For some people Motion 29 is one step too far. For others it doesn't go anywhere far enough. We all have different opinions and theologies on the bigger issues. We all have people we love who are affected by the bigger issues too.

As I wrote above, our Synod Representatives represent you at the upcoming One Day Synod. They do not represent themselves. Our Synod Representatives are John Palmer, Dave Pritchard and Michaela Ross.

Over the next 3 months our parish will go through a process of information and feedback about Motion 29. We are taking it seriously because if it does not go through, it is very likely indeed, that our national church will split. (After years of arguments many, from both ends of the spectrum, are tired and want something resolved.)

Our Diocese has put out some information to give us very useful background; historical, theological and pastoral. This can be found on the internet: <http://www.nelsonanglican.org.nz/diocese-resources> - you need to scroll down to Motion 29 near the bottom. There you will find 5 video clips and 4 documents. All are useful. Please do access them if you can.

We probably won't be printing out the documents because most of them are quite long. However we will be copying the video clips on to discs so you can view them at home very soon.

In early February we will be showing them at parish meetings. These will include a variety of times so that everyone is able to attend. ►►

◀ Vestry agreed last night that we will offer two ways for you to give your feedback on Motion 29 to us. They are either by way of written submission or simply talking to the Synod reps or to myself as your Vicar. (The written submission forms will be simple and we will limit the number of words to 300).

We'll be asking for your feedback early next year.

In the meantime please do look at the videos and read the documents if you can access the internet. And please do give myself or the Synod reps feedback on the process we have suggested.

Most of all please try not to worry. Jesus said we are to "let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day". We will endeavour to take his advice and take one step at a time.

But do please pray. Pray especially for those you disagree with. Pray for our church unity (local and

national) and witness to Christ.

This situation presents a huge challenge for us a parish. It also presents a huge opportunity. We can show God's grace and love to each other in ways that we have never needed to before. We can choose to work through this complicated, sometimes divisive issue, in ways that honour and esteem everyone. We can truly be the safe place for all people that we have been talking about and working towards.

We get to choose how we behave in times like this. My own choice is to be with you in this process; to pray diligently for us as a parish, a diocese and for our wider national church. My choice is to genuinely love all people; as far as is possible for me. (Please let me know if I slip up on this.)

May we Follow Jesus and Build Community even in this controversy – especially in this.



## Sunday Services

I've been delighted with our combined services over the holiday break and especially with the positive attitude from regular church folk. Everybody seems to have embraced these times and enjoyed participating in different ways. We have received lots of good feedback. So we are going to have more combined services.

At the end of last year Catherine resigned from her position as Children's Worker. She's laid a great foundation in our children's lives – thank you Catherine! Vestry has had a re-think if what our second Sunday service might look like. We believe the

time is right to have a service that is geared to meet the needs of a wide range of people – all ages, personalities, learning styles etc. So we are going to trial a slightly different way of doing church. It will be very much an Action-Reflection model and we will rely on your feedback.

In addition we have decided to go back to the earlier service time of 10:30am. The reasons for a later service seem no longer to exist (or at least to be surmountable with the earlier time).

Here is what our Sunday morning services will look like for the next 6 months to 1 year:

- On the first, second, fourth and fifth Sundays of the month there will be two services - 9.00am and 10:30am.
- On the third Sunday each month there will be a combined 10.00am service.

9.00am services will be first Sunday - Sung Eucharist, second Sunday - Communion with choir, fourth Sunday - Communion with music group and fifth Sunday - Sung Eucharist

There are two additional combined services planned in the first 6 months of this year. They are: Easter Sunday 1 April and Trinity Sunday 27 June.

We'll have morning tea in the church after the first service and when we are combined, after our joint service. When there are two services it will mean that folk can only linger for an hour. Instead of the leisurely times you've enjoyed in the hall we will need to kick you out at 10:30. We'll ring the bell so you know!

Please do give us feedback as we go along remembering that our aim is Following Jesus; Building Community